بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful)

THE RESURRECTION

BY

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THE RESURRECTION

EVERY religion tells of a Resurrection. All Messengers from God have insisted on belief in the life after death and predict a dreadful fate for evildoers in that coming existence. The Qur-án speaks repeatedly of the life after death, and for obvious reasons, seeing that no religion can possibly survive without that belief in the Hereafter, which is in itself at the root of everyday mundane morality.

Modern culture may scout the idea of such a life, but history consistently proves that disbelief in it has always been the precursor of evil in its blackest form, causing moral and physical decrepitude and bringing many a proud civilization to utter ruin.

The punishment of evil is its principal check, but many a wrong remains concealed, and thus avoids that check, wherefore belief

in the coming life where such wrongs will be duly requited is the only thing to kill our evil tendencies.

Unfortunately modern culture has tended to discredit this belief. Strong public opinion can to some extent check wrong by legal punishment, or public obloquy ; but very few people are virtuous for virtue's sake. The fear of punishment or of shame makes a man careful, and if we continue to evade detection we can do anything with impunity. The virtue of the day, therefore, is to avoid detection.

Our happiness is mostly concerned with our domestic life. Which in its turn mainly depends upon the purity of sexual morality. Nevertheless, this has become, nowadays, extremely lax. Marriage in the West is now a lottery, and unfortunately recent legislation has not tended to improve the position.

Sexual misdoing is not within the scope of criminal jurisdiction. Even civil law does not interfere in cases where evildoers are free from all matrimonial obligations. But this restriction is also perceptibly weakening, inasmuch as various contrivances designed to conceal evil have come into existence. For example, birth control is an important factor in this respect. Though the law does not concern itself with fornication, Nature punishes debauchery sometimes most terribly in the form of venereal disease. Safeguards against such punishment are sought for, and medical science is striving to discover some efficacious remedies. Science may win a victory over morality in this case, but it must not be forgotten that Nature is very inexorable in its penalties. These so-called safeguards are bound to promote excess in profligacy. It will weaken character and engender imbecility. Moral ruin will go

hand in hand with physical debility. A profligate race must lose all physical and moral strength and invite an early decay. Then the race will disappear. Let the moralists of to-day devise some means of stemming this rising wave of evil. Western wiseacres, in particular, should pay attention to the problem, since it is chiefly in the West that evil is rife. Belief in the life after death can alone save the situation. Evil has defeated both Law and public opinion in this fight. We shall have to account for our present misdeeds on the Day of Judgment.

The Qur-án gives three prominent features of the coming life : (1) Our future body will take our present actions for its superstructure. (2) It will manifest all our moral faults. (3) The body in it will contain the means of our happiness or misery in reward or punishment of our present actions. This preventative of evil in this life will automatically materialize

in our body in the Hereafter when all hidden things will be revealed. This description is absolutely true. Even present-day experiences in cases of wrong supply a sound proof. Certain venereal ailments leave their mark on the body of the sufferers; they also cause unbearable pain. What is possible in the physical world will in the spiritual existence take on a greater intensity, since all means to avoid detection and punishment will have disappeared.

Though such a belief may be described as making a virtue of necessity in order to retain our moral health, yet it is a truth. It is not a dogmatic assertion in the Qur-án, as we find it elsewhere. The Book produces cogent reasons for inviting intelligent belief. It bases its logic on the doctrine of Evolution. The principle, remember, was first preached by the Qur-án and it had no thought of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. It laid

down the fact that all things in their initial stage inherently possess all their future capacities and capabilities, which become developed in the various stages of growth through which they pass. It also said that this journey of Evolution continues until those concerned attain to perfection—that is to say, the full development of all the capacities latent in them. The very word "Rabb"—the first attribute of God in the Qur-án—signifies (as has been said before) the supplier of all these requisites of Evolution.

Though the subject of the Resurrection has frequently been dealt with in the Qur-án and the same principle of Evolution has often been referred to in support of it, the Qur-án has one full chapter with the title "The Resurrection." The Arabic word "Qiyámat," which signifies the Resurrection, takes "rise" for the literal meaning of its root. It means

some kind of rising. The Book very rightly[1] states that our personality contains in itself proof of every tenet taught in the Qur-án. The said chapter, at its very outset, refers to a certain psychological development in us, in proof of the Resurrection. It calls this "Nafs-i-Lawwámah"—"The Accusing Self." It also refers to the embryonic stages after the seminal juice has become located in the womb, which evolve immediately before the birth of consciousness in us. All this is no mere matter of chance, but a well-arranged design. Just like a seed which automatically, but under fixed laws, becomes a fruitful tree, the seminal seed evolves into consciousness. It has been described as "new creation" in the Holy Book.[2] But the Book does not teach

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1 "And in your own souls (too); will you not then see?"—The Holy Qur-án li. 21.

2 "Then We made the life-germ a clot, then We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We caused it to grow into another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of the creators"—The Holy Qur-án xxiii. 14.

that the human soul is a separate thing which has entered into our body from outside. It declares it to be the very offspring of the body—a certain creation out of our own physical personality. Though consciousness appears in the animal kingdom, it possesses some special features when it comes to the case of man. Individual consciousness is then seen for the first time. It begins to assert itself even in a child. Animals recognize no individual rights, but that sense becomes stronger with us as we progress in life. We protect our property, and the same life-tendency in us, in a more advanced form, compels us to respect the rights of others. It is when these are infringed that evil makes its appearance. In fact, sin lies in the violation of the rights of others. It is at this stage of our mental growth that we feel remorse when we find others' rights interfered with.

This phase of mind has been called, in the Qur-án, "The Accusing Self." Though we believe the soul to be the child of the body, as has been said before, yet the new growth is only a rising of the Spirit, and every one of us has had experience of that. It is nothing else than what has been popularly called the Voice of Conscience. It dies if we pay no heed to it, but it becomes stronger if we listen to it. If this new development, whether spirit or soul, had no stages of further growth, we could believe our present life to be the terminus of our journey. But we do experience further development of the said Spirit. The rise of the Spirit, in the form of "Accusing Self," causes a sort of struggle between our senses of right and wrong. Animality in us, on the one side, induces us to disregard the rights of others. It commands us to give free play to the desire of the flesh—the demands of our passions. This is the

animal spirit, and the Qur-án calls it our "Commanding Self."[1] But the "Accusing Self" stands in the way. It seeks to bridle our passions and it restrains us from actions which may affect the rights of others or from happiness which leads to hell. The struggle is really between the "Commanding Self" and the "Accusing Self" in our hearts. If the former wins, we are reduced to the animal —nay, we sometimes become worse than animals. But if our Spirit conquers and makes further progress, the struggle thus caused by the Chiding Soul comes to an end. Evil then loses all its temptations for us. We treat it as if it did not concern us. Our Spirit thus reaches that stage of development

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1 "And I do not declare myself free, most surely (man's) self is wont to command (him to do) evil, except such as my Lord has had mercy on: surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful"—The Holy Qur-án xii. 53.

which the Qur-án[1] calls the "Soul at Rest." We attain heaven[2] by our life on earth. With calmness and serenity of mind we are drawn to righteousness. There is no more struggle left in us and we enjoy real peace of mind. "The House of Peace" is one of the names that the Qur-án gives to the heavenly life. But this state of bliss, which takes one right out of the region of the flesh, does not fall to everyone's lot. Only a few of us attain it in this life, but that attainment is a possibility and not beyond our reach, though it may not be realized by everyone. Still, the very fact that it lies within the limits of our capabilities, though it remains in abeyance in most of us in this life, necessitates some sort of future life in which our faculties can reach perfection. Just as the Accusing Self, *i.e.* our conscience, is only a new arising of the Spirit

1 "O soul that art at rest!"—The Holy Qur-án lxxxix. 27.

2 "So enter among My servants"—*Ibid* lxxxix. 29.

in its evolutionary course, the "Soul at Rest" is a further development of the same spiritual arising. If life is continuous, and science does not deny it now, the Qur-án defines the features of the life to come. It is a further arising of the Spirit in us which will take place after our death when our physical nature will come to an end. The Resurrection, the further Rise of the Spirit, must occur, but it has been said in the Qur-án and in other books that it will be accompanied by a calamity of the most painful nature. Even this cannot be taken as a mere assertion. It is truth. History has seen many changes in the world. Every change for the better has been accompanied by some calamity. History also shows that such calamities have brought moral and spiritual regeneration. Prophets appeared when evil was most prevalent. They preached against it, but few listened to their exhortations. Disaster then occurred,

but produced human regeneration. It caused spiritual uprising and general good. Not only were the people of Pharaoh drowned in the Nile to be followed by a new generation of good men afterwards to the Judaic race, but history has repeated similar events many a time in India at the appearance of every great prophet in that country. A sceptically minded person may try to explain it in any way he likes, but he will have to face three things as co-existing with each other everywhere: the presence of evil, the coming of some terrible calamity, and the rise of a new order of good in the end. The same has occurred in our day. Latter-day civilization had become rotten to the core. Evil, though in a refined form, was rampant everywhere. It is so even now, though I hope that its end is very near. Calamity—the shadow of the evil as history shows—also overtook the world. It came to its height in

the horror and pain of the last Armageddon. It may visit in another form such races as have not been awakened by the horrors of the Great War; but we find here, too, the rise of the new Spirit. Western countries were the scene of the Great War, and there we discover palpable signs of spiritual regeneration. The war has practically destroyed both Formal Christianity and Atheism. If the latter brought about the catastrophe, the former, though avowedly a Religion of Love, failed to avert it. The followers of the Prince of Peace were, indeed, the chief offenders.

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways
> Lest one good custom shall corrupt the world.

It is certain that calamities are sent to shatter the old order and bring forth the new. They remind us of the terror and pains which all the Messengers of God have declared to accompany the Resurrection. If the ethereal

specks in their long journey at some stage have produced animal consciousness which has become evolved into the Chiding Consciousness—conscience in man—our further progress will universally create the "Soul at Rest" in the coming life. But the new order must be preceded by some terrible disaster. This is the Resurrection of the Qur-án.